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A Health View of Asbestos: An Annotated Literature Collection — 1960-1974*

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Introduction

Asbestos is everywhere! Possessing an enigmatic history of incalculable risks — and benefits — asbestos now reaches into our daily lives by myriad means. Long used in relatively small amounts for centuries asbestos uses and demands have gained momentously in our modern industrialized society. In the last 60 years, global use of asbestos has increased more than 100-fold — from 30,000 tons to four million tons. Asbestos is widely stated to be a constituent in at least 3,000 manufactured products. Industrial usefulness of asbestos stems particularly from its natural properties — nonflammability, flexibility, tensile strength, low density, resistance to acids and alkalies, and high electrical resistivity.

Resultantly, widespread dissemination in the total environment is revealed by asbestos fibers in the air we breathe, the food and beverages we consume, and the water we drink. Asbestos thus no longer represents singly an occupational hazard but a menacing and growing problem of environmental pollution threatening everyone.

Accordingly, interest in the health aspects of asbestos has gained both scientific and social momentum in recent years — two major national meetings have been convened on the adverse health hazards and ultimate consequences of asbestos: the first was held at the New York Academy of Sciences in 1964 [*Ann. N.Y. Acad. Sci. 132(1): 1965*] whereas the second took place ten years later at the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences in 1974 (*Environ. Health Perspect, No. 9:* 1974).

Historically, significant asbestos literature, in addition to the above proceedings, include A. J. Lanza's *Silicosis and Asbestosis*, Oxford Univ. Press (1938), the National Academy of Sciences' *Asbestos. The Need For and Feasibility of Air Pollution Controls* (1971), and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health's *Criteria for a Recommended Standard . . . . Occupational Exposure to Asbestos* (1972). The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) published in 1973 a critical *Monograph on Asbestos* which permits an evaluation of the carcinogenic risk to man *(IARC Monographs on the Evaluation of Carcinogenic Risk to Man. Some Inorganic and Organometallic Compounds. Volume 2).* Geographical, mining, production, and use data are presented in the *United States Mineral Resources Geological Survey Professional Paper 820* (1973) and the Bureau of Mines Bulletin 650 on *Mineral Facts and Problems (1970).* In 1972 P. Brodeur wrote a popular account of *Asbestos and Enzymes* (Ballantine Books). Recently C. Kenton prepared a National Library of Medicine Literature Search (No. 73-31) containing 363

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keyworded citations on *Asbestos Toxicity. January 1970 through July 1973.*

The asbestos literature — as is most published literature — is scattered throughout the world in diverse sources. Recently the Biomedical Sciences Section began building a computerized data base on asbestos for the period 1960 into 1974 emphasizing hazards and clinical aspects. Entries were expediently selected to represent a cross section of the total asbestos literature and to complement this issue (No. 9) of *Environmental Health Perspectives.* These 549 records each consist of author(s), title, journal, citation, factual abstract, and keyterms. Author, keyterm, and permuted title indexes serve as entry ports into the record file. The listing is arranged by year — the most current year first — and alphabetically within each year by author. The number of references in our collection as categorized by year are:

15/1974	73/1973	49/1972	96/1971
83/1970	36/1969	41/1968	29/1967
13/1966	59/1965	23/1964	6/1963
11/1962	9/1961	6/1960	

Original papers were annotated whenever possible; some few were taken from abstract journals. Annotations reflect author's remarks and conclusions as they appeared in the literature. Our computerized asbestos collection will be updated on a routine basis, with periodic publication and dissemination.

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